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Influenza Surveillance Specimen Collection and Transport Requirements

Web Link: <http://dhhs.ne.gov/publichealth/Documents/SpecimenCollectionRequirements.pdf>

Specimen: Nasopharyngeal washings or nasopharyngeal swab
Nasopharyngeal washings are collected with normal saline, followed by a swab of the nasopharyngeal mucosa and both samples placed in the same viral transport media container. (See collection procedure below)

Volume: 2-3 mL nasopharyngeal washings and nasopharyngeal swab place in the same viral transport media container. Viral transport media container should be labeled with the patient first and last name, collection date and time, and specimen source.

Transportation: Please place prepared specimen and requisition in the biohazard bag included in the supplies and apply the appropriate labels to the outside of the bag. Transport specimen to NPHL refrigerated. Samples must be received in lab within 72 hours of collection. Courier service is provided by your local reference laboratory as identified on the test requisition. Your reference laboratory has agreed to participate in the Nebraska Public Health Partner Courier Network. Please contact NPHL Client Services at 402.559.2440 or 866.290.1406 if you are not sure of the specimen transport option available to your facility.

Nasopharyngeal Washings/Swab Collection Procedure

Viral Transport Media (VTM) should be refrigerated and is stable until the date listed on the label. Facilities must submit specimens on a suitable commercially-available viral transport collection system, such as, COPAN Universal Transport Medium, BD Universal Viral Transport Medium, or Eagle Minimum Essential Medium (E-MEM).

Collect nasal or nasopharyngeal swab specimens on sterile polyester (Dacron or rayon) tipped (no calcium alginate) swabs with plastic or metal shafts. Wooden shafts are not acceptable, since they absorb collection media and emit substances that inhibit isolation and test performance. Cotton can likewise inhibit isolation and should be avoided.

Washing:

1. Cut off the distal end of the butterfly catheter (needle and butterfly) catheter extension set so that about 2-3 inches of tubing are left attached to the hub.
2. Draw up 2-3 mLs of sterile saline into a syringe.
3. Attach syringe to hub of butterfly catheter. Purge tubing with saline.
4. Put on gloves, gown, mask and eye protection.
5. Gently remove excess mucous from patient's nose. (If patient is an adult, ask the patient to gently blow nose. For pediatrics, a bulb syringe may be used to remove excess mucous.)
6. Position patient in supine position with the head of bed up 30°. The head should be turned to one side and tilted slightly backward.
7. Stabilize the patient's head and gently place the catheter into the nare. Placement should be in the nare (nasal wall). Depending on the size of the patient, this should be about 1-2 cm in adults and 0.5 cm to 1.0 cm in children (0.5 cm in neonates). See Figure 1.

Nasopharyngeal Washings/Swab Collection Procedure, Washing (continued)



Figure 1

8. Instill .5 - 2 mLs saline (.5 - 1 mLs for infants and children, 1 - 2 mLs for adults) into the nare and aspirate back mucous, saline and epithelial cells.
9. Repeat this process using the same syringe until the sample is cloudy or appears to hold cellular debris. (If the sample is inadequate, the process may be repeated on the opposite nare, using a second sterile syringe and tubing. Usually one nare is sufficient.)
NOTE: There may be some blood streaks in the mucous. This is normal and patients/parents should be told this is expected and will stop in a few minutes.
10. Transfer contents of tubing and syringe into transport media using the following process:
Depress syringe plunger and express fluid from syringe and tubing into transport media.
Then withdraw media/fluid back into syringe and tubing. Depress syringe plunger again, expressing fluid from syringe and tubing back into transport media.
NOTE: This is necessary to recover any cells or virus adhering to the tubing or syringe.
11. Transport refrigerated. Specimen must be received at NPHL within 72 hours of collection.

Nasal Swab

1. Insert a mini-tip culturette swab into the same nares from which the wash was performed approximately 3 cm and gently rub the mucosa.
2. Place the swab back into transport media containing aspirated material.
NOTE: Combining the aspirate and the swab enhances viral recovery.
3. Transport refrigerated. Specimen must be received at NPHL within 72 hours of collection.



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2012-13 NPHL INFLUENZA SURVEILLANCE PROJECT SPECIMEN SHIPPING INSTRUCTIONS

Using Nebraska Public Health Partner Courier Network

1. Place viral transport media in biohazard bag and secure closure.
2. Make a copy of the completed NPHL Special Influenza Microbiology Requisition and keep for your records.
3. Fold the original completed NPHL Special Influenza Microbiology Requisition and place in outside plastic sleeve of the biohazard bag.
4. Place the “NPHL” and “ship refrigerated” sticker on the outside of the plastic sleeve.
5. Place entire package in your laboratory’s refrigerated storage area for usual courier pickup.
6. Courier to NPHL through your reference laboratory courier. The specimen may also be shipped with the NPHL or Regional Pathology Services courier if this service is provided to your facility.
7. Call NPHL client services with questions or concerns at 402.559.2440 or toll free at 866.290.1406.



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2012-13 NPHL INFLUENZA SURVEILLANCE PROJECT SPECIMEN SHIPPING INSTRUCTIONS *Using FedEx*

1. Place viral transport media in biohazard bag and secure closure.
2. Make a copy of the completed NPHL Special Influenza Microbiology Requisition and keep for your records.
3. Fold the original completed NPHL Special Influenza Microbiology Requisition and place in outside plastic sleeve of the biohazard bag.
4. Place entire package in styrofoam shipper with frozen ice pack. Seal shipping container with packing tape and *apply pre-paid shipping document and UN3373 Category B label.*

Note: Personnel shipping specimens via FedEx should be familiar with packing and shipping requirements for Category B substances.

5. Place for FedEx pickup that same day.
6. Call NPHL client services with questions or concerns at 402.559.2440 or toll free at 866.290.1406.